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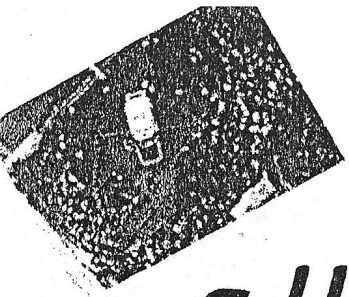
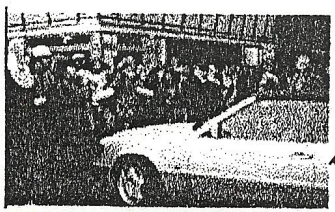
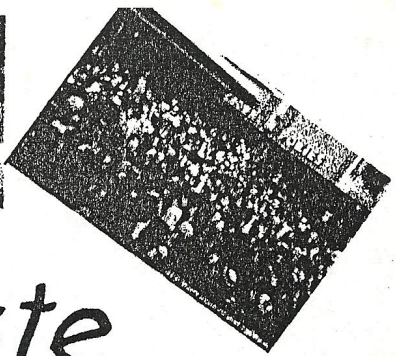
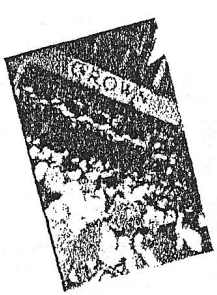
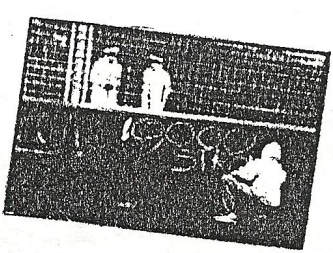
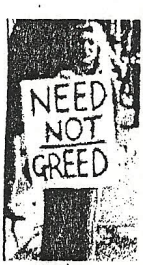
"the journal of Revolutionary Action"

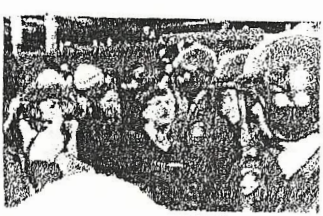
S11 - a taste of freedom

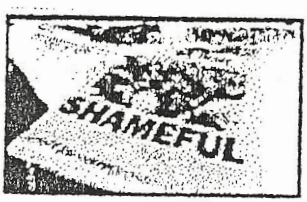
Monday, September 11 - more than ten thousand people mass outside the Crown casino, sucessfully blockading the WEF meeting of corporate tyrants. This militant and courageous show of strength clearly demonstrated that the global uprising against corporate tyranny continues to gain momentum. S11 was a success for many reasons. Here in Wollongong, an s11 collective helped to organise in preparation for the actions in Melbourne. Many local activists were involved in the Wollongong s11 collective's activities which included numerous meetings, forums, film night, gigs, education, blockade training and the distribution of information about s11 and the fight against corporate tyranny. The organisation of the Wollongong s11 collective enabled people with different political experience, ideas and knowledge to test democratic practice. Wollongong s11 activists managed to work well together, despite their political differences, raise issues, spark discussion, cooperate and gather support from a wide variety of individuals and organisations.

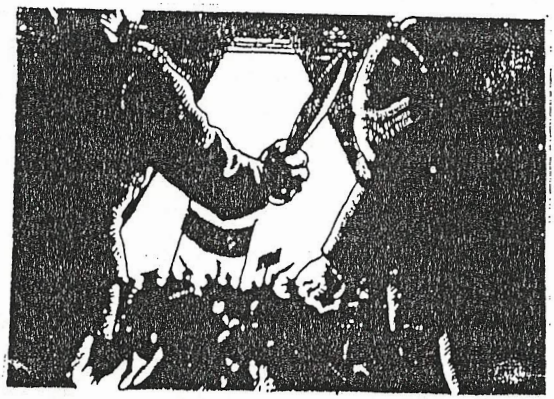
The Wollongong s11 collective tried to reflect the non-heirarchical, decentralised and democratic aspirations of the s11 movement. While s11 was a bundle of contradictions, it did help to link many progressive and revolutionary activists and organisations across Australia and internationally. The use of the internet greatly helped to decentralise the organisation of s11. The s11 Web site was a major success, becoming one of the 400 most used sites in the world during September. As well, the s11 "Melbourne 2000" discussion list was open, wide ranging and provided a forum for discussion and debate between many activists who were not previously in contact with each other. The establishment of Indymedia in Melbourne and Sydney was another important development which demonstrated a new seriousness about the challenge to democratise the distribution of ideas and information. Large numbers of activists and interested people were exposed to new ideas and information about the movement, it's history and visions for the future. Much of the education and training that occured leading up to s11 was a genuinely collaborative and creative interaction of the experienced and not so experienced.

Around 100 local people travelled to Melbourne for days of action which were courageous, determined, empowering, colourful and creative. S11 has inspired many thousands of people and it's impact will flow through the community, emboldening and giving heart to those who are daily opposing corporate tyranny and all types of exploitation and oppression. s11 has had a major impact on the political landscape. The facade of capitalist "democracy" was exposed as the corporate powers created a virtual police state, adopted "shoot to kill" powers and unleashed waves of viscious thuggery . The ultra-violent police operation had been planned for nearly two years and involved a sophisticated barrage of lies and distortion. Yet the frenzied media, political and police campaign to prepare for and create violent attacks on those taking part in s11, failed to





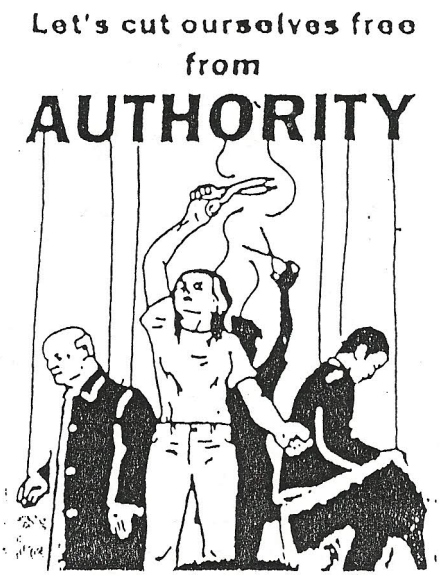
deter thousands of people. Instead of running scared they braverly defied the largest police operation in Victorian history, even after repeated violent attacks.



In response to the corporate clampdown, those supporting s11 struggled to create new vibrant forms of democracy with many decision making processes occuring through various networks, affinity groups and directly on the blockade lines themselves. The successful mobilisation of the more than 10,000 people involved relied on the self organisation of broad-based, pluralist networks of activists. The organisational pluralism of s11 was most clearly demonstrated on the day of s11. Many blockade lines organised themselves and made their own decisions. The various "blocs" (green, black, red and black, various shades of red etc.), the many affinity groups and the large numbers of individual activists were generally able to work together and become an effective militant force. The effectiveness of this type of mass democratic action demonstrates how a diverse, decentralised and creative challenge to the power of the ruling class is possible and can be sucessful.

Yet, a number of organisations and individuals have tried to portray themselves as the leaders of s11. This elitist view of s11 attempts to justify the role of self proclaimed political experts as guides for the masses. Some organisations attempt to portray the organisation of S11 as a mirror of their own structure and compete to become spokespersons and develop representative structures. These organisations emphasise the role played by their party or group and be-little the intelligence, commitment, dynamism and power of the vast majority of people who took part. Others complain that the movement lacks leadership, or as another s11 activist put it, they

worry that many activists have "not acknowledged the existing leaders right to lead". Before and during s11, those who see themselves as leaders attempted to overpower, isolate and marginalise those they couldn't control, those who questioned the authority of established heirarchies, whether they were the police, politicians, trade union officials or political party leaderships. In this the heirarchies shared a common goal, the goal of controlling us. Through the use of their power they try to divert us from the struggle to free ourselves. Self organisation is a real enemy for all these hierarchies - it challenges their very existence. They are scared of the ability of the working class to take direct action and to develop our own methods of struggle irrespective of, or even against, the wishes of all the so called authorities, leaders and vanguards.



The role and behaviour of the "marshalls" at s11 demonstrated clear differences in how those involved view the movement. There were some marshalls who sought to impose their authority and the "leadership" of their political organisations on blockade lines. Many people believed that the marshals were s11 representatives who spoke and acted on behalf of the s11 Alliance. But in fact, the marshalls were no more representative of s11 than any of the other blockaders. Many of the marshalls had meetings of their own, where strategy was decided and where decisions of supposedly primary mass meetings were reinterpreted. Meanwhile, many of those taking part, including some of the marshalls, favoured a decentralisation of decision making. The reality was that many individuals and groups often made their own decisions about what to do, where to blockade, how to blockade and so on. Some marshalls saw themselves as facilitators of this type of democratic process and it was this lack of command structure that often gave the blockade the

fluidity and unpredictability needed to outwit the massive police operation. The examples of direct democracy during s11, of people mobilising and organising themselves collectively, were important and powerful experiences of libertory practice, of freedom in action. It is these experiences that are at the heart of s11.

The campaign to disrupt, attack, distort and hijack s11, demonstrates the growing power of the re-emerging global anti-capitalist movement. Corporations and their supporters have developed many sophisticated techniques to destroy and disempower opposition. The ruling class, with the help of some "leaders" of social movements and workers organisations, are now desperately attempting to derail and integrate the growing anti-capitalist movement. We can expect to hear a lot more about consultations, cooperation and involvement with corporations and their institutions. About the need for discipline, leadership, compromise and the need to "be realistic". There will be more concerted attempts to channel activists into using methods like electoral campaigns, lobbying politicians, winning leadership of various organisations and other means which deflect people from participatory, non-heirarchical, militant and decentralised activism.

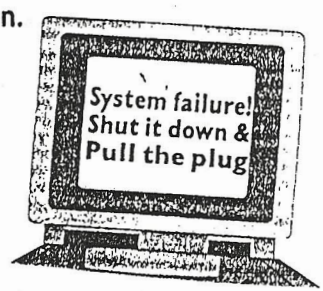
The struggle to get rid of capitalism is a struggle for freedom and self government. The structures and practices of heiracrhical organisations and institutions are designed to thwart these objectives. Yet, activists need to realise that they are not isolated when they see through the undemocratic practices of many left, progressive and working class "leaderships". A lot of us have initially felt it beyond our power to do battle against the

bosses as well as against the bureaucrats and so called "leaders" in the working class movement. But, increasingly many of us realise that we are more numerous and stronger than we thought. That by attempting to develop truly democratic practices, we can support, encourage and clarify the struggle for a better world. The successes of s11 clearly demonstrate that large numbers of people are now in the process of developing new forms of organising that seek to by-pass heirarchical, centralised and representative institutions.

For many people S11 was both a transforming joy and a near death experience. For a few hours we experienced a taste of the possible, of a different world. s11 re-awakened peoples imaginations and allowed us the freedom and power to challenge the corporate reality that the police attacks sought to reimpose. Our thinking and planning will now have to go beyond what we've done before in an effort to find new ways of building a militant democratic anti-capitalist movement. An important part of that effort is to build on the connections that were made during s11 and to encourage participation in far-reaching public discussions of the world we want to live in and how to get there. How will we overcome the entrenched power and violence of a smart and vicious ruling class with the passion, good will, and festive brilliance we tasted so briefly in Melbourne?

The working class has an obvious and growing need to break the barriers imposed by capitalist structures. An essential problem is how to take up a critical attitude towards capitalist society in a democratic and constructive way. I believe that in order to do this we need to reject all positions that set out to justify capitalist society and it's heirarchy of power relationships, without becoming elitist or secterian. That, while respecting and assisting those in the working class movement with different ideas, we need to constructively challenge not only those who are presently exercising power, but the very ideas and practices of heirarchy, leadership and representation.

Lots of Love
Nick



AIN'T NO

It is now almost most a given that Seattle changed every thing. At the close of the 1990s, a decade that had been so shaped by neo-liberal triumphalism and the continual capitulation of the traditional left here was a militant out burst of resistance and carnival that shouted ENOUGH! It was a shout heard round the world. It had seemed that finally the opposition to capital had finally reinvented itself in a form that could take on the machinery of oppression. It set the standard. And here in Australia so many of us answered the call and through ourselves in M1 and S11 and tried to bring the spirit of Seattle to the streets and suburbs of the Australian struggle. And here to we were greeted with mini-Seattle s that created equal enthusiasm on a more local scale. The Wollongong M1 action for example helped re-introduce militant picket line strategies that were then taken up in latter fights like the Joy mining dispute and challenged the authority of the dead hand of the labour party and the trade union bureaucracy (two sides of the same social democratic coin) over workers struggle. S11 seemed to in just a few short days to push aside all that old shit and replace it with the actual movement so much of us hoped to see. Now it is true enough that all these almost mythical days were really products of years of 'lesser' struggle and campaigning and questioning. But it is also true that the freshness of these kinds of action is beginning to sour. Instead of breaking headlines there is a media black out of the actions in Cincinnati and Nice et al. The news that does seem to seep through is full of stories of almost ritualised clashes with police and subsequent repression against the most militant sections of the movement. The state seems to have responded to the challenge put to it by this new upsurge of popular rebellion. Events like s11 shook the dusty of invincibility from the structures of the system. The system s response is as usual a mix of incorporation and repression.

POWER

LIFE

Faced with this intensification of the class struggle with great new opportunities on one hand and violent repression on the other, the way ahead is far from clear. In fact part of the exciting nature of the events of the last two years is their spirit of experimentation and adventure. But in this vacuum of certainties conservative forces on the left such as social democracy and Leninism have the opportunity to fill it with their old ideologies. Ideologies that will shackle the movement to the failures of the past. It is well worth, I think, to look at the practice of the last ten years and try to work out a way forward

The rhetoric of the 90s was that the class war was over and all of us were winners (and grinners) because we all just decided to get on with the job at hand (a continuation of the rhetoric of the rest of the last 50 years). In fact that there wasn t even a working class any more, there was a middle class and an under class who was all in jail so why should we worry. Of cause the other half of the rhetoric was that we were all over paid, under worked, over unionised, blue-collar millionaire, university educated, chardonnay drinking sons/daughters of lawyers, who spent too much money on Arts and multiculturalism and too much time at the football and slacking off and if we didn t get into shape quick smart, work harder for less (best still if for free) then all the factories were going to go to Indonesia. It is kind of obvious then that this rhetoric was just a weapon in the still intense class struggle going on. But from our side of the fence (the one that goes around Packer house, Parliament house and Rose Bay) it was a rather a bleak struggle as the neo-liberal offensive ripped apart the gains of 100 years of popular struggle (welfare, union rights, free education et al). For most of my experience during the 90s struggles were all about defending the old and decaying welfare state against the new rights offensive. From

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the beginning the whole thing reeked of defeat. The 90s for me was continual demonstrations that went nowhere, continual engagement with bureaucratic movements, the ditching of revolutionary ideas for a wistful view of state-ownerships. Our tactics were the tactics of protest as usual : marches down streets organised by small committees often tied to social democratic structures, that won nothing and after a couple of parades down George Street disappear entirely with only the tally of papers sold that day left to judge if the rally was success full .

Half the time there wasn t even a fight. Just union deals, that could be condemned in the pages of Green Left weekly that were sold at best outside the factory gates. Which I think is a potent symbol of much of the activity of the revolutionary left at the time.

The MUA dispute was not so empowering because the working class won. It was amazing that the class fought. Victory didn t mean anything compared to the joy of resistance.

With Friends like this, who the fuck needs COINTELPRO

-Propergandhi[°]

I think it is necessary to cast a critical look over this form of social democratic struggle. It wasn t just that the demands were not revolutionary enough, but the entire way that the protest were

[°] My mum just did a quick edit of this and thought the use of the word fuck was too violent - This is probably a good point and shows how different sections of the population use different terms to expresses their discontent.

Nuts to Ya System!

POWER

organised and the relationships that were created between leaders and led, worked to restrain the class and ultimately demobilise the movements, how ever well meaning the organisers were.
The protest as usual form of practise creates a mass dichotomy between those who do the organising, who make the posters, make the speeches and those who turned up to listen and march and carry the pre-made posters. Small teams of activist often attached to the lower levels of the social democratic bureaucracy (such as student unions) ran them selves ragged doing all kinds of activity (poster making meetings, ring arounds etc) in an attempt to mobilise large amounts of people and were meet with often very dismal results. This is not because there is something inherently wrong with making posters etc, but the structures of the spaces that they were organised in are repressive and hierarchal. The potentially liberating and empowering experience of organising was routinized around a division of labour that left control of the campaign in the hands of leaders. This dynamic often turned the rest of organising into a kind of shit work. Whilst the very nature of these bodies (like SRC) were totally cut off from the actuality of the ever day struggles and oppression in the workplace and community. These structures worked to maintain these divisions. The formula for mass activity was the inactivity of the masses.

Now it is probably true that any movement or campaign group will start with a small group of militants doing the organising and calling the meetings, what is important though is that these militants realize that this is a problem and actively engage in opening up the organising space, and facilitating participation and self-organising. The understanding and practice of the M1 collective (for example) being just *one of many spaces* were militancy and

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class power is gathered is the basic building blocking of this new rise in class struggle and the new politic of self-liberation.

There is of cause a relation between social democratic organising and the conservative nature of their demands. The view that the masses of people were passive drones meant that politics get watered down so you can meet them where they are at. Simple politics will reach simple minds (apparently). But these simple politics were nothing more than the rhetoric of a by gone year, based on by gone assumptions. In an attempt to reach people where they were at actual completely failed to understand the modern nature of class struggle and class composition. People did not rally on mass to save social democracy because they had experienced for at least 50 years and knew that it sucked.

It is worth noting that there were attempts at making the demands more radical. My experience in the student movement was of a number of attempts at increasing the radicalism through increasing the political nature of the protest posters. This was no more of a success than attempts before. Social Democratic bureaucracies cannot produce revolutionary movements what ever the posters say.

We Don t Want Your Life No More. Fuck Off

-Flux of Pink Indians

Whilst all this was going on, a whole section of the class, mainly young people were engaged in struggle that was outside and often completely unseen by the official movement and when it was was dismissed out of hand as being life-stylist . This considered of the thousands of people involved in various counter-cultural movements (raves, gigs, zines, markets, co-ops, etc). Whilst the

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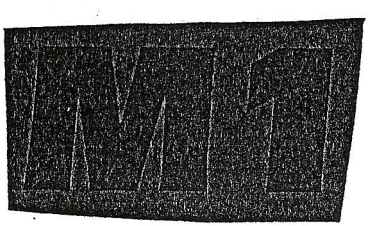
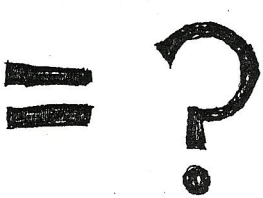
offical movment tried to mobilise the mass by rejecting any sense of radicalism, the masses were mobilizing themselves through loose networks based around the idea of total change now. The idea of people taking back their lives and communities around particpation and democracy and open hostility to capitalism and consumer relations was infinatly more powerful than rallies to save Telstra, ABC, et al. Whilst Social Democracy aimed at defending and glorifying work and the state, this section of struggle was gaining momentum by rejecting both.

Whilst so much of the 90 s were dominated by this split between life stylists and workerists (or what ever terms you want to use). I think that this was a relatively new division, brought on by the defeats of the late 80s. Another splinter in a collapsing movement.

However this began all to change at the end of the 90s. Globally with things like the link between reclaim the Streets and the Liverpool Dockers and locally with things like Ohms not Bombs, new linkages began to form. I do not think that this is a coincidence.

A new political practice was developing fuelled by a rising consciousness amongst a new section of the working class. Workers found themselves in casualised industries, (fast-food, call centres, etc) outside of the traditions of trade unions and the compromises of social democracy. For many young workers life was suddenly not what it was cracked up to be. Often overeducated, and with aspirations that went beyond the suburban dream, they found a future of lousy pay, intensified work/management practices, ultra-co modified culture, and no job security. However the strength of the neo-liberal offensive in the work place (and the exclusion of huge sections of the population from paid work) and the real genuine lack of experience in work place struggle meant that the first elements of rebellion often happened elsewhere. Often this was culturally. From





Submission Hold to Sea Change the desire for a new life outside the oppressive and alienating machinery was spreading. These cultural rebellions reflected their radical roots and stressed egalitarianism and participation, and a desire to untangle yourself collectively from a system of world wide oppression.

Much of what is called the new anti-capitalist movement is made up of young people with a history in radically counter culture (often counter cultures that were born at the beginning of the neo-liberal offensive and carried the a lot of the good politics of the new left in them when they went underground). I think this reflects the cultures radical nature, the potency it has in attracting new militants and the sub-conscious and conscious realisation in these movements of the need to take the battle from the 12 to the street. Even when the people in the movement do not fall into this section of the class the politics that is arising from these young militant sections are almost certainly hegemonic. But it is not hegemony of dogma, but a realisation that democracy, diversity and flexibility are the ways to advance. Self-organisation and self-management has replaced the faith in parties, unions and institutions that dominated the movements of yester year Their only challenge is the resistance from old social democratic bodies who are realising that a movement far more radical and inspiring then them is rapidly moving out from their control.

M1=S11?

Despite the rhetoric M1 does not equal S11. In other words we cannot just do a repeat of last years action and hope all goes well. For a start s11 focused on a single target in the forum of the World Economic Forum, whilst m1 does not have that single target. An attempt to substitute the stock exchange for the WEF fails to notice

the crucial differences: i.e. the WEF was a section of the ruling in action to co-ordinate continual exploitation, whilst the stock exchange is mealy a tool in the maintenance of that exploitation.

Yet what else should we try to do? Well I don t have a single answer but I have some ideas.

Firstly it is important to reject the old social democratic form of protest and adopt the new more radical ones.

This means that the old forms of small hierarchal organising bodies and a focus on largely symbolic actions that only work to show our opposition must be rejected.

Instead those who take the initiative to set up M1 collectives must take a conscious attempt to work to facilitate self-organisation. We must be anti-leadership constantly working to involve more people in our collectives and support the formation of independant and autonomous groups and actions. We take the initiative so others can also. M1 collectives I think, should reach out to others in the community in all forms of struggle and encourage them to participate in M1 by join actions or inventing their own

Instead of actions that call on the State to do things for us, we must do them ourselves. Where we face the realty of exploitation let us do what we can to free ourselves from it. Thus I think rather then focusing on stock exchanges lets focus on sites of exploitation in our communities and facilitate direct action and resistance there. There is no shortage of targets.

Lets get rid of this division between political and cultural. Lets start talking about our entire life

In practice I think we can hope for a range of actions this year. Mass Pickets, Free Food distribution, Free Festivals, Theft, Taking time of from Work and School, Culture Jamming. Every kind of action that takes the power back

What is important is that in the face of hierarchy and leadership we maintain the necessity of ~~non~~ democracy and self-organisation

By Dave

IN DEFENSE OF SCIENCE

RED H@ZE

Replacing the cult of god by respect and love of humanity, we proclaim reason as the only criterion of truth; human conscience as the basis of justice; individual and collective freedom as the only source of order in society.- Bakunin: Revolutionary Catechism. We have come across a lot of people recently who think science is a load of shit. People who we used to think were logical, have proved themselves to be anything but. This has irritated us greatly, so in response we are writing this article to try and talk some sense into them. Science is, in our opinion "the pursuit of knowledge". Maybe we watch too much Star Trek (as if there's such a thing), but logic is the most basic characteristic of a rational mind. People who say "But scientists change their answers they don't really know" miss the point completely. If a theory gets proven wrong, then a new theory gets developed and tested. It is the PURSUIT of truth. The universe is infinitely large and extremely complex, understanding all of it is probably impossible (just because there is so much). Many people who think science is a load of shit find their solace in religion (at least their theories never change). Of course these beliefs are based on "faith" and are not provable by logic or science. Once upon a time religion was the best explanation for the world. They were the original theories of the universe, basically because this was as far as human understanding had come. People modified their beliefs as evidence had come to light. Many polytheistic (many gods) religions changed over time to become monotheistic (single god) religions. As actual knowledge about our surroundings has deepened religious influence has declined. (Of course they tried to stop this.) Religion and science are obvious enemies, this has been proven throughout history. Ancient Greek scientists believed that the world was round, the most obvious proof was ships going over the horizon. By about 280 BC they also knew its size to within 5% of the current measurements. They also thought that matter was made up of particles the smallest being atoms. Aristotle believed (without scientific basis) that the world was made up of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. This suited the religious community and was taught as truth for the next 1600 years, causing little scientific progress because there was a neat little deal where Kings got a divine right to rule in return for supporting the church both politically and militarily. Any attempt to say anything different, even backed up with evidence was crushed. For example: Galileo argued that the Earth orbited the sun. Christian teaching, at the time said that the Earth was the centre of the universe. The church made him recant his findings and imprisoned him for

about 30 years. Over time the chorus of reason drowned out the church. The teachings of the church failed to withstand the tested logic of science. The monarchies lost their divine right to rule, and were subsequently overthrown by the bourgeois revolutions. Property became, and still is the only basis by which humanity is divided. Looking at science and technology at the dawn of the 21st century it is important firstly, to differentiate between knowledge and application. With control of the worlds means of production firmly in the hands of the few rich enough to own factories, the application of science and technology is based around making money. This is done without regard to human and environmental costs (except for when appearing environmental friendly is profitable). People who reject scientific thought and technology on the basis of the damage caused by capitalism are (whether they realise it or not) advocating a return to primitive communism (equality in poverty). We were led to believe that revolutionaries were the people who looked at the world clearly see what needed to be done and did it. Now it becomes clear that many do not think rationally. Rejecting the over-use of capitalist based technologies that are causing environmental destruction does not mean the need to reject science. We are not arguing for the wholesale use of technology without regard to human and environmental costs. Many products today are completely useless, wasteful and harmful. Yet they are profitable. Only once the profit motive is removed can humanity look at which technologies we need and what we can do away with. Scientific research in this society is largely funded by corporations, their results reflect this. Some scientists care more about money, than truth. They falsify reports, experiments leave out damaging information about their research etc. All to continue funding their research. Companies wouldn't continue to pay a scientist that kept giving them the results they want to hear. Corporations, much like the church also suppress technologies that threaten their control (read profitability). Examples of this are vast. For example Vietnam has built labs to produce really cheap AIDS drugs for the third world. A joint statement was issued by pharmaceutical companies stating that if Vietnam distributed the drug. All pharmaceutical companies would stop providing the country with any medicine, whatsoever. Another example is oil companies buying patents for cars that run on extremely low amounts of petrol, and then suppressing them. Humanity needs to do away with the profit motive as the driving force of our society. Only by organising ourselves freely, without competition can we take responsibility of our planet. As it stands, we have very little control

over what gets produced, how things get produced or what get researched. Imagine the scientific breakthroughs that will be possible if everybody thought about problems facing our lives. We could use our collective intelligence to take on the worlds problems. Technology is the apparatus with which we take on these collective interests, as a tool we can meet common goals. Without agriculture, the human population would consist of scattered isolated groups of people facing a daily struggle to survive. Without medicine we could have no concept of the ability to make us well. So anything that threatens technology also threatens the pursuit of our collective interests. To attempt to stop certain popular technologies being used, a state is necessarily required to oppress those that want to keep the technology. A secret police would be required to track down 'undesired technologies' and persecute those responsible. Scientists would again be oppressed in order to maintain the level of technology, and not allow any advancement. Basically the situation would arise, as in medieval times, where scientists would be charged with Heresy for thinking about the world. The modern conception of science is also a product of class society. The differentiation between scientist and normal person needs to be broken down. We should all consider ourselves to be scientists because discovering stuff is cool. If you think that something is wrong disprove it. If you have a new theory for the universe that seems to work in practice, explain it to people and try to prove it. Science is only valid until someone disproves it. The point is, whilst it may be treated as an elitist field in this society, we all have to take responsibility for ourselves and our environment. The key to this is understanding. Understanding comes though thinking things through logically. Dismissing science is condemning humanity to live in a world of poverty and ignorance in which nothing would change.

That's right! I won't be in today, it's... May 1st

Australian Phone in Sick Day!

phuc.it.up mayday2k.org s11.org

Sandon Point Action

Bush regeneration * Blockade Training *
*** Food drop * BBQ & more ***

Help reclaim Sandon Point
Support the Aboriginal Tent Embassy
& the Community Picket

10am Tuesday May 1st

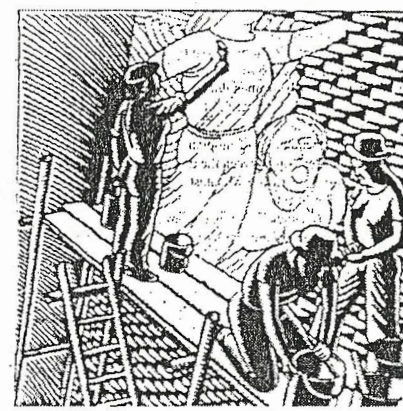
Sandon Point Community Picket
cnr. Point & Blackall Sts, Bulli

Corporate control -

Getting workers to help run the system

There is growing awareness amongst the ruling class of the need to stifle the growing militancy of the working class by re-incorporating sections of workers into the management and regulation of the capitalist system. Influential billionaire, George Soros, some time ago warned that "the uninhibited pursuit of self-interest which is not tempered by the recognition of common interest" will spell disaster for the capitalist system. In Europe, this "recognition of common interest" has seen the European Union introduce European Works Councils (EWCs) in larger, multinational enterprises. These Works Councils are compulsory and elected committees of workers which have the right to meet with management in order to discuss the structure and economic and financial situation of the company involved.

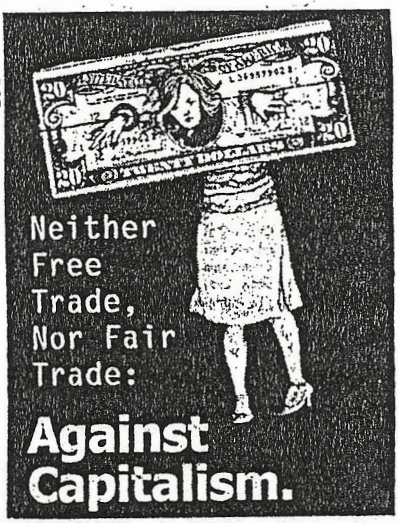
Padraig Flynn, who has responsibility for overseeing the Work Council's, stresses the importance of workers being "engaged in the process of constant change and restructuring necessitated by globalisation". Flynn warns that if workers are not consulted about change, it will create: 'At worst, a culture of conflict, at best a culture of cynicism. To nurture globally productive companies and workforces, we must aspire to quite the opposite effect. We need to create a culture of anticipation, to actively engage the



workforce in the process of change.' According to Flynn, the message is clear: 'Mechanisms for proper worker involvement can increase the flexibility of the business environment in which firms operate. And they can offer workers a sense of confidence that they will not emerge as the losers in the restructuring process and that they have a stake in the future of that business.'

In Australia, influential ALP members are now trumpeting the EWC scheme as the way forward for Australian unions and the ALP. Described on the NSW Labour Council's website as moving "towards a scheme of industrial democracy for Australia", ALP leaders see works councils as "holding out the prospect of increasing union membership and rejuvenating the union movement." The present ALP "Industrial Democracy policy" supports; "the extension of industrial democracy and other modern forms of work organisation in major enterprises and workplaces" along with the "encouragement of employee share ownership programs."

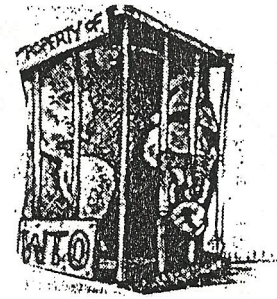
The ALP, the ACTU and employers all agree on the need to increase corporate profits. This is done through cuts in workers wages and conditions and by increasing productivity. They argue that this will boost profits leading to more jobs and better wages. The employers, Governments and ALP controlled trade unions all support the idea of partnership and collaboration between bosses and workers to deny and lessen class conflict. They work together on the basis of a "social contract", which co-opts workers into assisting capitalism rather than opposing it.



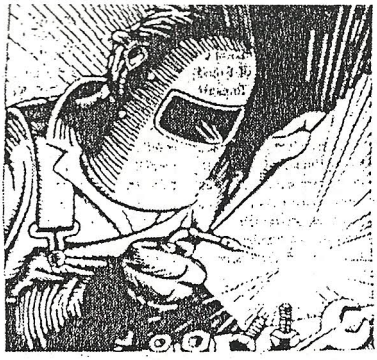
Under this corporatist structure, compliant workers organisations are central to the organisation of the capitalist state. The aim of the bosses and their supporters is to restrict conflict by containing it within institutions which blur or deny the different interests of the ruling class and the working class and weaken the basis for independent workers' organisation. Support for "industrial democracy", is based on the belief that we already have a democratic political system with the existence of parliamentary representation. In the hands of the ALP and the ACTU "industrial democracy", like parliamentary democracy, means corporate rule with an elite of so called "workers representatives" helping to manage a hierarchical system of exploitation and oppression.

Share holder campaigns are another new initiative supported by some trade unions and the ALP. Here workers are being encouraged to strategically use share holdings to make corporations more "responsible". Trade union managed superannuation schemes have increasingly integrated union leaders into corporate management practices, while share ownership by workers has also been encouraged to help tie them closer to corporations. Now unions are arguing that share holder campaigns can help reform corporations from within. This idea is based on the belief that corporations are democratic institutions which can be "reformed", rather than undemocratic bodies based on exploitation and oppression. The growing use of worker/union share holdings in corporations to exert influence will further integrate unions and workers into a corporate managerial outlook. Here they will learn that managing capitalist businesses is largely based on understanding, influencing and responding to the dictates of "the market". Market based decisions are all about the self-interested pursuit of profit, the exchange value of goods produced for sale not for human need and reflect the unequal and irrational distribution of power and wealth. Concepts of "Industrial Democracy" or "workers participation" in helping to manage capitalism, promotes the idea that there is no fundamental difference between bosses and workers. In this process workers are expected to accept responsibility for the development of property which they do not own, and help develop a system which aims to prevent them from ever owning it.

A local trade union official recently explained how unions are adapting to global corporate "democracy", when he said; "We need to mend the social fabric that has been torn by the structural reform associated with globalisation. To do this we need to start taking seriously the concerns of people who are feeling the impacts most harshly. We live in a democracy and most Australians have benefited from the wealth that globalisation brings. It is beyond the power of the unions or any government to halt the process - but we can shape it." In order to help "shape" this new corporate reality, ALP leaders like former ACTU President, Jennie George, are proposing new initiatives for the trade union movement such as "union employment agencies, rather like labour hire companies" and "union affiliations with labour market program providers and group training schemes." In other words, unions should compete with private agencies to service capitalist industry, by training and supplying workers. ALP/union leaders, like Ms. George, are now looking for ways that workers can become more closely tied to the bosses and the state, as they were during the years of the Hawke/Keating Labor governments.



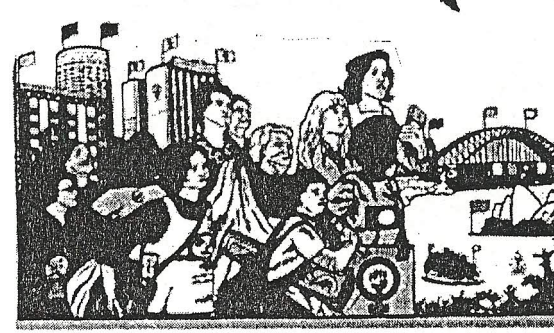
Internationally a similar process is being developed to counter the growing revolt against corporate tyranny. A month after s11, the leadership of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund welcomed proposals to improve consultations with trade unions. The proposals were tabled at meetings between the World Bank's President James Wolfensohn, IMF Managing Director Horst Köhler and a high-level international trade union delegation led by Bill Jordan, general secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the world's largest trade union body. "It is time to think more institutionally about how the world trade union movement can interact more effectively with the World Bank, to the mutual benefit of both parties", Mr Jordan told the World Bank boss at the meeting. "We need to do more: co-operation, regular consultation and a dialogue with the institutions with better monitoring of programmes", emphasised Dieter Schulte,

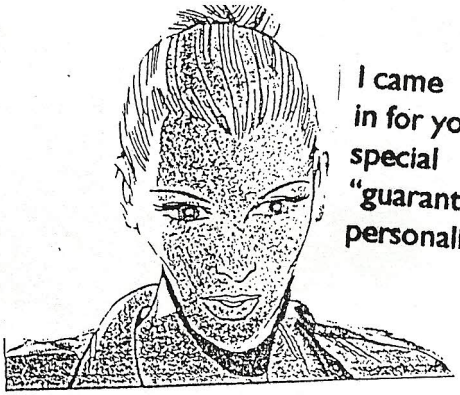


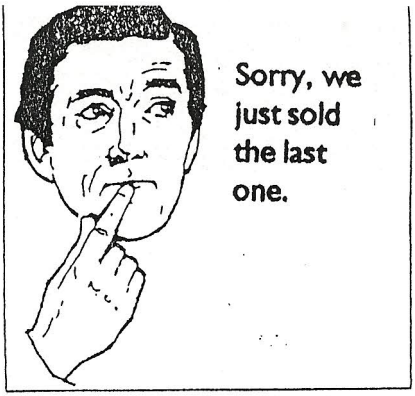
President of the German Trade Union Confederation. "This would greatly contribute to establishing a global democracy", Etsuyo Washio, President of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation Rengo, added. Trade union reports suggest, not suprisingly, that the proposals for more cooperation were welcomed by both the World Bank and the IMF. At the close of the meetings, the World Bank made a commitment to an "enhanced programme of continued consultations with trade unions at national and international meetings, further debate on privatisation and joint work to develop core labour standards in World Bank policies and strategies."

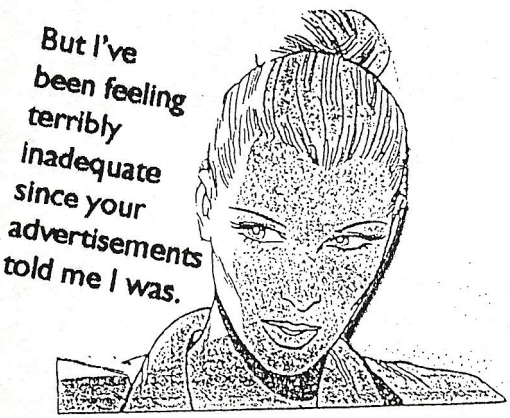
In the face of growing global protests, the major corporations and the institutions they control, are now more willing to allow unions to argue for marginal improvements, as long as they help keep the working class under control and leave unchallenged the power structures of the system. As part of this new corporate consensus, some Australian unions are looking towards strategies to incorporate "self-organised, community and social-justice activist groups into labor unions". Policing the working class, especially in periods of economic "downturn" or crisis, is the traditional role of Labor. The ALP views and uses the trade union movement as the "industrial arm" of their party as the trade union movement is politically and financially tied to the ALP and dominated by ALP bureaucrats. As the ALP gears up for becoming the Federal Government, the process of trying to incorporate workers and "independent" organisations into ALP controlled union structures and more closely tying these structures to the corporations and the state, can be expected to deepen.

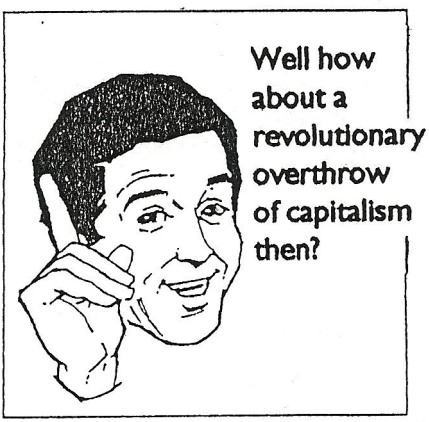
Nick

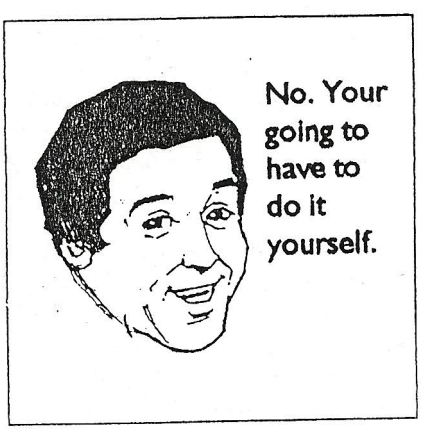












* Conditions apply.

When Davos Meets Porto Alegre: A Memoir

By Walden Bello*

Porto Alegre, Brazil

"Hemingway said that the rich are different from you and me. How can anyone expect the people in Davos to understand the crisis that globalization has visited on the lives of people like those of us here in Porto Alegre?" That was going to be my opening line.

When I arrived at the university studio for the televised trans-Atlantic debate with George Soros, the financier, and other representatives of the global elite gathered in Davos, Switzerland, a visibly shaken Florian Rochat of the Swiss delegation was waiting for me. Swiss are known for being impassive, but Florian was visibly shaken. "They are arresting protestors in Davos and other places in Switzerland," he told me. "They're killing democracy in our country. Our friends there are asking you to support them in calling for the shutting down of the World Economic Forum."

That request drove out any lingering desire to be "nice" in the coming exchange, which had been billed by its producers as a "Dialogue between Davos and Porto Alegre." The ambitious, one-million dollar plus production involving four satellite hookups, aimed to explore if there was a common ground between the annual elite gathering in Davos and the newly launched World Social Forum (WSF) in this southern Brazilian city. Millions of people globally were waiting for the transmission.

Since I had been in Davos last year, the producers requested that I make the opening statement for the Porto Alegre side. I obliged with the following: "We would like to begin by condemning the arrests of peaceful demonstrators to shield the global elite at Davos from protests. We would also like to register our consternation that while we in Porto Alegre have painstakingly come up with a diverse panel of speakers, you in Davos have come up with four white males to face us. But perhaps you are trying to make a political statement.

"I was in Davos last year, and believe me, Davos is not worth a second visit. I am here in Porto Alegre this year, and let me say that Porto Alegre is the future while Davos is the past. Hemingway wrote that the rich are different from you and me, and indeed, we live on two different planets: Davos, the planet of the superrich, Porto Alegre, the planet of the poor, the marginalized, the concerned. Here in Porto Alegre, we are discussing how to save the planet. There in Davos, the global elite is discussing how to maintain its hegemony over the rest of us. In fact, the best gift that the 2000 corporate executives at Davos can give to the world is for them to board a spaceship and blast off for outer space. The rest of us will definitely be much better off without them."

The press termed the next 1-1/2 hours not as a debate but as an emotional exchange that, as the Financial Times put it, "sometimes degenerated into personal insults." But I and the other panelists-among them, Oded Grajew of Brazil's Instituto Ethos, Bernard Cassen of Le Monde Diplomatique, Diane Matte of Women's Global March, Njoki Njehu of 50 Years Is Enough, Rafael Alegria of Via Campesina, Aminata Traole, former Minister of Culture of Mali, Fred Azcarate of Jobs with Justice, Trevor Ngbane of South Africa, Francois Houtart of Belgium, and Hebe de Bonafini of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo-were simply reflecting the non conciliatory mood towards the Davos crowd of most of the 12,000 people who flocked to Porto Alegre.

For this constituency, a significant number of whom watched the debate at a huge auditorium at the Catholic University, globalization was a deadly business, and many undoubtedly shared the feelings of Hebe de Bonafini when she screamed at Soros across the Atlantic divide, "Mr. Soros, you are a hypocrite. How many children's deaths have you been responsible for?" That Soros in the course of the debate made some utterances regarding the need to control the negative impacts of globalization hardly endeared him to this crowd, who saw him mainly as a finance speculator who had made billions of dollars at the expense of third world economies.

The holding of the week-long World Social Forum was nothing short of a miracle. Proposed by the Workers' Party of Brazil (PT) and a coalition of Brazilian civil society organizations, supported with significant funding by donors such as Novib, the Dutch agency, and provided with strong international support by the French monthly Le Monde Diplomatique and Attac, the European anti-globalization alliance, the event was put together in less than eight months' time. The idea of holding an alternative to the annual retreat of the global corporate elite in Davos simply took off. While there were some glitches here and there, the event was resoundingly successful, despite the massive challenge of coordinating 16 plenary sessions, over 400 workshops, and numerous side events.

A major reason for the WSF's success is that it had the organizational support of the government of the city of Porto Alegre and the government of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, both of which are controlled by the PT. Porto Alegre has, in fact, achieved the reputation of being a city that is run both efficiently and with sensitivity to social and environmental considerations. The city is said to be at the top of the quality of life index for Brazil.

The sharing in Porto Allegre focused not only on drawing up strategies of resistance to globalization but also on elaborating alternative paradigms of economic, ecological, and social development. Militant action was not absent, with Jose Bove, the celebrated French anti-McDonalds' activist, and the Brazilian MST (Movement of the Landless), leading the destruction of two hectares of land planted with transgenic soybean crops by the biotechnological firm Monsanto.

Porto Alegre achieved its goal of being a counterpoint to Davos. The combination of celebration, hard discussion, and militant solidarity that flowed from it contrasted with the negative images coming out of Davos. The Swiss town was the center of Switzerland's biggest security operation since the Second World War. The Swiss police pulled out all the stops to prevent protesters from reaching the Alpine resort, and fired water cannons and tear gas on demonstrators in Zurich, arresting many of them. Even conservative Swiss newspapers condemned the police operation as a threat to political liberties in Switzerland.

Perhaps the outcome of the duel between Davos and Porto Alegre was best summed up by George Soros: "The excessive precautions were a victory for those who wanted to disrupt Davos. It was an overreaction. It helped to radicalize the situation."

On his performance in the televised debate with Porto Alegre, Soros commented: "It showed it is not easy to dialogue.I don't particularly like to be abused. My masochism has its limits." Observed the Financial Times: "Such uncomfortable experiences seem temporarily to have scrambled his ability to deliver pithy soundbites."

But Soros was not alone in flubbing his lines. Soon after my opening statement, Bernard Cassen of Le Monde Diplomatique leaned over and told me: "Walden, it wasn't Hemingway who said the rich are different from you and me. It was Scott Fitzgerald."

* Dr. Walden Bello is executive director of the Bangkok-based Focus on the Global South and professor of sociology and public administration at the University of the Philippines.

The World Heart at the World Social Forum

Manifest of Anti-capitalist Youth against the World Social Forum

The Manifest that follows was written and signed by people mostly youth) that were camping in the youth camping of the WSF. About 200 people made a demonstration against the "social-democrat" tendency of the WSF and read the Manifest.

Manifest of Anti-capitalist Youth against the World Social Forum
Another World is Possible...
Only Destroying Capitalism!

Since Seattle, passing Washington, London, Milan, Melbourne Seoul, Prague to Nice, time and again tens of thousands of anticapitalist youth have denounced, with direct action, the great monopolies and international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO, and the European Union. These institutions are responsible for the exploitation of millions of workers, for the destruction of the environment, for relegating millions of persons in dire poverty.

Now, here,in Porto Alegre , at the World Social Forum, the NGO's, the union bureacracies, and the directors of the institutionalized political parties change the content of the struggle of the young anticapitalists to the reactionary policy of "humanizing capital". Humanizing capitalism with the French ministers that persecute immigrants, who form a government that, together with NATO, bombed Yugoslavia, killing thousands of people and repressed the anti capitalists in Nice. Humanizing capitalism together with the bankers and the multinationals. Humanizing capitalism together with the governments who, like the PT [Worker's Party], continue paying the foreign debt, repressed the strike of the professors of Rio Grande do Sul and the occupation of a federal building in Porto Alegre, and continue repressing the street merchants and the homeless on their squatted land. Governments that continue to make payments to the multinationals.

In truth the "stars" that direct this government and mayoralship, self-proclaimed democratic and popular, interested in the 2002 elections, resolved to serve as a test tube for a new capitalist order. One sustained by a social democracy that permits bourgeouis exploitation and pleases the middle-classes with democratic play-actings such as the Participatory Budget that aims to impede protests via the co-optation of popular movements. Rounding out the picture are the various "left" parties that even while criticising this policy, capitulate before a more thorough questioning.

Humanizing capitalism is utopian and reactionary. Thus, we, anti-capitalist youth from the Youth Camp, form a part of the anti-capitalist movement an stand in solidarity with the youth denouncing the World Economic Forum in Davos. We say: The World Social Forum is a ruse of those who wish to detour the anti-capitalist fight towards the policy of collaboration of classes and elections, continuing to apply the misery of capitalism. Thus we continue our efforts in the construction of a national anti-capitalist network under the cries of : "Down with the World Economic Forum, IMF World Bank and WTO"; to which the World Social Forum is not an

alternative, "down with the plan Colombia!", "Long live the Palestinean Intifada", "No to the payment of the domestic and foreign debts!", "No to the Privatizations!".

Capitalism kills, we will kill capitalism. It is up to the youth, the workers, and the poor anti-capitalists, loyal to the spirit of Seattle, Nice, Prague and Davos to impede the distortion of the anti-capitalist intervention and its use by its enemies.

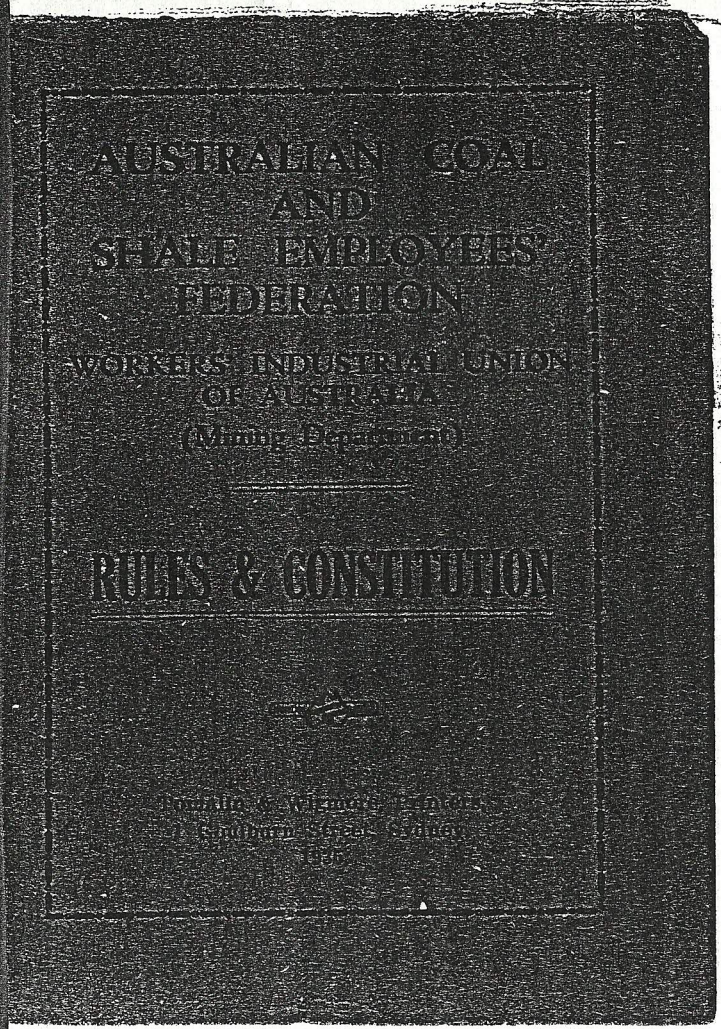
Signed,
Juventude e Luta Revolucionaria, Jornal Espaco Socialista, Comite Marxista Revolucionario, Anarco-Punks, Movimento Che Vive (RJ), Coletive pela Universidade Popular (Porto Alegre), Secretaria Estadual de Casas de Estudantes de Goias, Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua, Federacao Anarquista Gaucha, Grupo Cultural Semente de Esperanca, Acao Global por Justica Local, Resitencia Popular RJ/PA, Nucleo Zumbi Zapatista - ABC Paulista, Estrategia Revolucionaria, Socialismo Libertario Brasilia, Federacao Anarquista Uruguaia, Acao Revolucionaria Marxista (RJ), Frente de Luta Popular, Juventude Avancar na Luta, Ligua Bolchevique Internacionalista, Espaco Cultural Quilombola - Aracatuba - SP, e demais ativistas anti-capitalistas.

Call for Contributions

Do you have something to say? We would love to publish your contributions. If you have some analysis of the left and progressive movements, info on a topic you think would be interesting to other revolutionaries then please send it along with your pictures, comics, stories, poems etc to:

PO Box 167
Keiraville 2500

email:
revolutionary-action@yahoogroups.com



Australian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation.

RULES AND CONSTITUTION.

PREAMBLE.

1. We hold that there is a class struggle in society, and that the struggle is caused by the capitalist class owning the means of production, to which the working class must have access in order to live. The working class produce all value. The greater the share which the capitalist class appropriates, the less remains for the working class; therefore, the interests of these two classes are in constant conflict.

2. There can be no peace as long as want and hunger are found among millions of working people, and the few who constitute the employing class have all the good things of life.

3. Between these two classes the struggle must continue until capitalism is abolished. Capitalism can only be abolished by the workers uniting in one class-conscious organisation to take and hold the means of production by revolutionary political and industrial action.

"Revolutionary action" means action to secure a complete change, namely, the abolition of capitalist class ownership of the means of production—whether privately or through the State—and the establishment in its place of social ownership by the whole community.

What is Revolutionary Action?

Revolutionary Action (RA) has been established by a group of people committed to a revolutionary transformation of society based on the united power of the working class. To achieve this aim we support the self- mobilisation and self - organisation of the working class, who make up the vast majority of society. RA believes that only the collective democratic action of the oppressed can create a society based upon the fullest possible political democracy.

RA is for people who call themselves anarchists, socialists, communists or whatever, to come together and fight against capitalism and it's effects. Revolutionary Action is a collective not a political party. Within the boundaries that the collective explicitly believes, that the way to create a better world is through revolutionary workers' self-liberation, the greatest amount of pluralism and debate is encouraged. Decisions of the collective may be publicly disagreed with and openly challenged by individual members or factions formed where a group of members disagree with the majority. RA has no central body and no hierarchy. All decisions are made by the general membership and any administrative positions are without privilege, recallable and will only exist to administer decisions of the membership.

RA supports the development of action and ideas that promote the concept of self management and try to counter and prevent bureaucracy, hierarchy and elites from emerging in our movement. We envisage a successful revolution being the result, not of a forcible seizure of state power nor the winning of an election, but of mass democratic action. RA wants to help build working class power. We do not seek leadership, but rather, try to assist ongoing struggles while drawing out and articulating their revolutionary implications. RA wants to be a flexible and innovative organisation that can help to educate and organise people. We aim to create, maintain and broaden networks in the revolutionary movement and try to incorporate into every aspect of our practice democracy, an absence of authoritarianism or hierarchy. Through a democratic, militant and dynamic struggle against capitalism we aim to help transform ourselves, our class and the world. Revolutionary Action wants to help make it possible for people to gain control of their everyday lives and to help make life as marvelous and fulfilling as it can be.

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